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Housekeepers' Chat

Friday, March 21, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Biscuits in New and Novel Forms." Information from Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletins available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes" and "Home Baking."

--ooOoo--

"Please give us a good recipe for biscuits," writes a radio friend. "And if you have a recipe for Cheese Biscuits, will you broadcast that one, too?"

I shall. And while I'm about it, I might as well broadcast directions for Drop Biscuits, Nut Biscuits, Raisin Biscuits, and Pinwheel Biscuits.

"There is nothing that adds quite as successful a touch to a luncheon or tea as some kind of biscuit, piping-hot from the oven," says a baking authority. "The hostess who is 'famous for her biscuits' is the envy of every housewife, for no matter what the occasion, you can count on her serving a light, delicate hot bread in some new and interesting form. For luncheon or supper, when salad is the main course, she may serve Cheese Biscuits, and for dainty afternoon tea refreshments, she may choose Raisin Biscuits.

"The secret of her success is not hard to discover. She simply learns to make perfectly a plain baking-powder biscuit, and varies it in several easy ways. She handles her dough as little and as lightly as possible. Then with an oven of the proper temperature, light, flaky biscuits are practically guaranteed."

Before I planned this biscuit program, I interviewed the Recipe Lady of the Bureau of Home Economics. I have eaten her light, flaky biscuits; in fact, I have eaten more of them, at one breakfast, than I'd care to tell you.

Now, if you'll take your pencils, I'll give you a standard recipe for biscuits, and then I'll give you six variations.

First, the standard recipe -- five ingredients:

3 cups sifted soft-wheat flour
1 teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons baking powder

4 to 6 tablespoons shortening, and
1 cup milk, or enough to make a
soft dough.

Five ingredients, for baking powder biscuits: (Repeat).

Mix and sift the flour, salt, and baking powder. Cut in the shortening with a biscuit cutter, or rub in lightly with finger-tips. Add the milk gradually, using just enough milk to make a soft dough. Make a well out of the flour, and when you add the milk, stir from the center, using a fork. Toss the dough out on a lightly floured board. Knead very lightly, for about one minute, until the dough is well mixed. Pat it, with the palm of the hand, to about half an inch thickness. When you cut the biscuits, don't forget to dip the biscuit cutter in flour each time, so you'll have a clean surface. Cut as many biscuits as possible the first time, for the dough is not quite so nice after it has been patted out a second time.

Bake the biscuits in a quick oven. If the oven is too hot, the biscuits will have a hard crust on the outside, and be too soft on the inside.

The biscuit recipe, you will notice, calls for 4 to 6 tablespoons of shortening. The Bureau of Home Economics has put it this way because some people like very rich biscuits, and some like them with less fat. The Recipe Lady for one, prefers to use only 4 tablespoons of fat in proportion to these quantities of other ingredients.

Just keep your pencils, please, while I give you these easy-to-make variations.

Number One -- Twin Biscuits. These are nice with dainty afternoon tea refreshments. Cut the biscuits very small, not more than an inch in diameter. The inside piece of a doughnut cutter is about right. Moisten the top of each biscuit, lightly, with butter or with cream, place another biscuit on top, press down lightly and bake.

Number Two -- Drop Biscuits. Add enough extra liquid to make a drop batter. Drop by tablespoons, on a greased pan.

Number Three -- Cheese Biscuits. Add four or five tablespoons of grated, tasty American cheese, when you add the fat.

Number Four -- Nut Biscuits. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped nuts when you add the fat.

Number Five -- Raisin Biscuits. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped raisins to the flour mixture.

Number Six -- Pinwheel Biscuits. These are very nice for party biscuits. They are made like a jelly roll -- but wait, I'll give you the Recipe Lady's exact directions, for Pinwheel Biscuits.

Make up biscuit dough, by the recipe I gave. Then have ready a third of a cup of light brown sugar or soft maple sugar and 3 tablespoons of butter, creamed until it is soft and smooth and easy to spread.

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Toss the dough on a lightly floured board, knead lightly for about one minute, and divide the dough into thirds. Roll out each piece of dough into a square about one-half inch thick, spread with the butter, and sprinkle the brown maple sugar over the butter. Then roll up the sheet of dough, sugar side in, like a jelly roll, and cut crosswise in inch slices. Place the biscuits cut side down on a greased pan and bake for about 15 minutes in a moderate oven (375 degrees F.). Watch carefully that the sugar does not burn. Serve hot.

We might also mention, in connection with our biscuit program, the desserts which can be made of biscuit dough: Coffee Cake, Short Cake, and Fruit Cobbler.

The recipe for Coffee Cake is in the radio cookbook, on page 70, so we'll consider Short Cake next.

For Short Cakes, follow the directions for Baking Powder Biscuits, adding one or two tablespoons of sugar to the flour mixture, and one or two extra tablespoons of shortening. Bake in a big round cake, or as individual servings. If you bake the Short Cake as individual servings, cut with a large biscuit cutter. While hot, split and butter. Place sweetened crushed fruit between and on top.

To make Fruit Cobbler, roll the dough fairly thin -- about a fourth of an inch. With this dough, line a square or oblong pan. Place sweetened fruit in an even layer over the dough, and bake till the crust is brown.

Our menu today features Broiled Fish. A long time, since we've had Broiled Fish. The entire menu is as follows: Broiled Fish; Canned Corn and Tomatoes; Cauliflower; Radishes; and for dessert, Hot Biscuits and Honey, or Soft Maple Sugar.

Perhaps I'd better give you directions for cooking the fish.

To broil fish, place it skin side down on a greased pan, or baking sheet, if you are going to cook it under a gas flame. If you are going to broil it over hot coals, place it in a greased broiler. Fish should always be broiled at medium temperature for a comparatively short time, so it won't be tough and dry. In using a gas flame, turn it fairly low, and place the fish far enough from the flame so that it will cook rather slowly. A four pound fish will require from 25 to 40 minutes, depending on how thick it is. Just before it is done, place it closer to the flame, to give a golden brown. Slip the broiled fish gently onto a hot platter, add a little melted butter, and serve with it some slices or sections of lemon.

And that's all, till Monday.

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